

REMARKS

In response to an Office Action mailed on August 15, 2005, Applicant respectfully requests that the above-listed Amendments be entered and the Application be reconsidered. With entry of the above-listed Amendments, claim 48 is amended. Claims 48 and 54 are independent, and the remaining claims are dependent.

Claim 48 is amended to correct a minor typographical error. Claim 48 is amended to recite "and [and] an electrical wiring raceway."

The Examiner rejected claims 4-7, 12-15, 20, 23, 24, 33-41 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over US Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0018757 by Saito, *et al.* ("Saito") in view of US Pat. No. 6,130,893 to Whitaker, *et al.* ("Whitaker") and further in view of US Pat. No. 6,012,951 to Krawez, *et al.* ("Krawez") or US Pat. No. 5,807,139 to Volansky, *et al.* ("Volansky"). Claim 15 was canceled in a previous Amendment.

The present Application discloses and claims a decentralized computer network that includes a data infrastructure (comprising data processing equipment) and a plurality of communication outlets. Each of the communication outlets includes a faceplate, a bridge and a plurality of data interfaces. Each data interface is accessible via the faceplate for connection to a user data device. In addition, each data interface is connected, via a network connection provided by the bridge, to the data infrastructure. Each outlet is configured for attachment to an outlet box, an opening in a wall or an electrical wiring raceway.

The Examiner asserted that Saito (in paragraph 0061) discloses an ability to have bridges. Saito discloses a home network comprising a plurality of IEEE 1394 information outlets 11-15. Each information outlets 11-15 constitutes a single IEEE 1394 node. (Paragraphs 0055-0056.) Saito discloses connecting together the information outlets through bridges. (Paragraph 0061.) However, Saito does not disclose including a bridge in any of the information outlets 11-15, as required by claim 48.

Furthermore, an IEEE 1394 bridge is unlike the recited bridge. An IEEE 1394 bridge includes exactly two ports. (P1394.1 Draft Standard for High Performance Serial Bus Bridges, page 1, lines 6-8 and page 5, line 46.) (For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the referenced Draft Standard is filed herewith as Amendment Appendix A.) An IEEE 1394 bridge is only capable of

connecting together two IEEE 1394 buses. (P1394.1 Draft Standard for High Performance Serial Bus Bridges, page 1, lines 10-11 and page 5, line 46.) Thus, exactly two ports are needed in an IEEE 1394 bridge, each port being connected to one of the two IEEE 1394 buses.

An IEEE 1394 bridge is unlike a bridge used to interconnect two or more local area network (LAN) segments. A LAN bridge, such as an 802.1 bridge, includes at least two ports. (802.1D IEEE Standard for Local and metropolitan area networks, Media Access Control (MAC) Bridges, page 31, section 7.2.) (For the Examiner's convenience, a copy of the referenced Standard is filed herewith as Amendment Appendix B.) Frequently, LAN Bridges include more than two ports. As noted, the recited communication outlet includes a bridge. The communication outlet also includes a plurality of data interfaces connected to the bridge. Thus, the bridge must have at least two ports connected to the plurality of data interfaces. In addition, the recited bridge provides a network connection to the recited data infrastructure. Thus, the bridge must have at least a third port for the network connection. The IEEE 1394 bridge disclosed by Saito cannot include three ports. Thus, Saito does not disclose or suggest a bridge, as recited in claim 48.

The Examiner asserted that Whitaker (in Figs. 1 and 3 and columns 3-6) discloses bridges 46 employed in each outlet. The Applicant respectfully submits that this assertion is not supported by the Whitaker disclosure. Whitaker's reference 46 refers to a three-position analog switch, not to a bridge. (Column 3, lines 36-38.) The three-position switch 46 is shown clearly in Fig. 3. The three-position switch 46 is used to connect an analog telephone 30a or 30b to a plain old telephone system (POTS) line 25 in case of a power failure. (Column 3, lines 54-60 and column 4, lines 26-42.)

Whitaker refers to an ADSL Transmission Unit-Receiver (ATU-R) 24 as acting as a "bridge" between ADSL packet technology and the protocol under which a LAN operates. (Column 3, lines 25-26.) However, as is well-known, an ATU-R 24 is a modem, not a bridge.

Whitaker also refers to a 2-Way Analog Bridge 60. (Column 3, lines 50-52.) However, the 2-Way Analog Bridge 60 merely carries analog signals. Such an analog bridge is incapable of being connected to a plurality of data interfaces and, via a network connection, to a data infrastructure.

Krawez discloses an in-line, high-frequency filter for a telephone plug/jack combination that can be used to prevent DSL signals from being degraded by the capacitance of telephone, fax, etc.

devices. Krawez's device includes inductors to block high-frequency signals, but no other electronic components.

Volansky discloses a surface mounted multimedia outlet. Volansky's device includes no electronic components.

No art of record, either alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a communication outlet that includes a bridge. For at least this reason, claim 48 is believed to be allowable.

Claims 4-7, 12-14, 20, 23, 24, 33-41 and 43 depend directly or indirectly from claim 48. These dependent claims are, therefore, believed to be allowable, for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 48.

The Examiner rejected claims 16, 17 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Saito in view of Whitaker and Krawez or Volansky and further in view of US Pat. No. 6,714,534 to Gerszberg, *et al.* ("Gerszberg"). Gerszberg discloses a system for increasing bandwidth and the number of simultaneous services that can be transmitted over a single twisted-pair to customer premises equipment from a central office. (Abstract.) Gerszberg discloses an intelligence services director (ISD) 22 that may be coupled to a central office 34 via a twisted-pair wire, hybrid fiber interconnection, or other customer connection 30. (Column 6, lines 28-31.) The central office 34 preferably includes a facilities management platform (FMP) 32 for processing data exchanged across the customer connection 30. (Column 6, lines 37-40.) Customer premises equipment may individually or collectively serve as a local network at the customer site. (Column 7, lines 14-16.) Gerszberg discloses connecting this customer premises equipment to the ISD 22 via twisted-pair wires, fiber or wireless connection (presumably existing house wiring, etc.). However, Gerszberg does not disclose or suggest a bridge within each communication outlet, as recited in independent claim 48. The rejected claims depend directly or indirectly from claim 48. These dependent claims are, therefore, believed to be allowable, for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 48.

The Examiner rejected claims 18-19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Saito in view of Whitaker and Krawez or Volansky and further in view of US Pat. No. 6,661,893 to Vaughn, *et al.* ("Vaughn"). Vaughn discloses a telephone loop monitoring and isolation device. The device provides loop isolation if voltage across the loop falls below a predetermined level or of the loop is

short-circuited. None of the Vaughn disclosure is related to the claimed decentralized computer network.

The rejected claims depend directly or indirectly from claim 48. These dependent claims are, therefore, believed to be allowable, for at least the reasons discussed above and with respect to claim 48.

The Examiner rejected claims 49-53 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Saito in view of Whitaker and further in view of Krawez or Volansky and further in view of US Pat. No. 6,404,764 to Jones, *et al.* ("Jones"). Jones discloses an Internet protocol telephone system that enables users to place and receive Internet-based calls via the users' existing plain old telephone service (POTS) equipment and house wiring. Jones discloses using existing house wiring as an in-premises POTS network 20 to interconnect a number of POTS telephones 26. The in-premises POTS network 20 is connected via an RJ-41 type interface 22 to a network premises gateway 10. The network premises gateway 10 is connected between the POTS network 20 on one side and a public switched telephone network (PSTN) interface unit 18 and (optionally) and Internet access device 14 on the other side. (Fig. 3; col. 2, lines 34-36.) In contrast, a communications outlet, according to claim 48, can be used to connect user data devices to a data infrastructure.

The rejected claims depend directly or indirectly from claim 48. These dependent claims are, therefore, believed to be allowable, for at least the reasons discussed above and with respect to claim 48.

The Examiner rejected claims 54 and 56-60 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Saito in view of Whitaker. The Examiner asserted that Saito discloses using "some kind of bridge element" in paragraph 0061. The Examiner further stated that, for the sake of argument, Saito fails to teach a bridge in the outlet. The Examiner asserted that Whitaker discloses outlets that employ bridges. As discussed above, neither Saito, Whitaker nor any other art of record, either alone or in combination, discloses providing a plurality of communication outlets, each outlet including a bridge, as recited in claim 54. For at least this reason, claim 54 is believed to be allowable.

Claims 56-60 depend directly or indirectly from claim 54. These dependent claims are, therefore, believed to be allowable, for release the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 54.

The Examiner rejected claim 55 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Saito in view of Whitaker and further in view of US Pat. No. 6,167,120 to Kikinis ("Kikinis"). The Examiner asserted that Kikinis discloses the communication system, wherein a bridge is coupled to a network including a PBX.

Kikinis discloses apparatus and methods in which existing home or office wiring is used to distribute signals between a home server unit 100 or a micro-PBX 301 and various equipment, such as a telephone 144 or 309, a fax 141 or 307, or a PC 130 or 310. (Abstract; column 4, lines 8-11; column 6, line 65 to column 7, line 1; and Figs. 1 and 3.) Kikinis discloses using converters (also refer to as "adapter boxes") to connect certain equipment to the house wiring. For example, Kikinis discloses an adapter box 305a for connecting a fax machine 307 to house wiring 302c. Kikinis also discloses a converter box 305b for connecting a telephone 309 to house wiring 302b. (Column 7, lines 18-32; and Fig. 3.) These converter boxes 305a and 305b "are adapted for mounting to existing telephone jack outlets presenting a new outlet for connecting to the specific device." (Column 7, lines 33-36, emphasis added.) However, Kikinis discloses that in the case of a personal computer (PC) 310, the conversion is accomplished in an expansion card compatible with any expansion slot in the computer. (Column 7, lines 38-40, emphasis added.) Thus, the PC 310 connects directly to the house wiring 302b (Fig. 3), by plugging the PC directly into a telephone jack. (Column 8, lines 31-33 and lines 55-61; and Fig. 4.) Even if, *arguendo*, Kikinis's multimedia distribution system is analogized to a portion of the recited communication outlet, Kikinis's home service unit 100 or micro-PBX 301 is connected to the opposite end of the house wiring from user devices than the recited communications outlet.

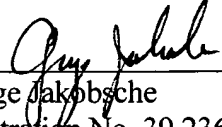
Furthermore, claim 55 depends from claim 54. Claim 55 is believed to be allowable, for at least the reasons discussed above and with respect to claim 54.

The Examiner rejected claim 61 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Saito in view of Whitaker and further in view of Jones. The Examiner rejected claim 62 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being patentable over Saito in view of Whitaker and further in view of Krawez. Claims 61 and 62 depend directly or indirectly from claim 54. These dependent claims are, therefore, believed to be allowable, for release the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 54.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the present Application is in a condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter that would expedite allowance of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES S. HISCOCK

By: 
George Jakobsche
Registration No. 39,236
Attorney for Applicants

WEINGARTEN, SCHURGIN,
GAGNEBIN & LEOVICI LLP
Ten Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109
Telephone: (617) 542-2290
Telecopier: (617) 451-0313

GJJ/mac
329134